桜思い
I LOST MY PARENTS IN AN ACCIDENT
AND WAS TAKEN IN BY MY GRANDMA WHO LIVED OUT IN A REMOTE VILLAGE
BEFORE LONG, A YEAR HAD PASSED...
AND MY GRANDMA ALSO PASSED AWAY FROM SICKNESS
SAKI-CHAN, I BEG YOU
PLEASE SAVE THAT CHERRY BLOSSOM TREE.
I WONDER IF I'LL BE SAFE HERE...
I WAS ENTRUSTED WITH A CHERRY BLOSSOM TREE
SAKIKO AMAMIYA, 16 YEARS OLD AND ALONE IN THE WORLD
AS YOU MIGHT EXPECT, I'M DEAD TIRED
I MEAN,
.....!
!?

第1回角川漫画新人賞
準大賞
&
ASUKA特別賞
W受賞作品
唯一の肉親をなくしたついてない私…
…に憑いているのは
桜の精!?
My orphaned and unlucky self...
...is being haunted by a cherry blossom sprite?!
選考委員大絶賛!!
桜囲い
Sakura Choi
音中さわき
I...
FOUND~
YOU~
HAUNTED
?!
ゼ
ゼ
ゼ
ゼ

EVIL SPIRIT, BE GONE!!
!
?!
I'M NOT AN EVIL SPIRIT.
THAT'S RUDE...
HE-
HE CAME OUT OF THE TREE!
WHAT ARE YOU...?
WHAT
FOLLOWING ME ALL THIS WAY WITH A SCARY FACE!
WH-WHAT DO YOU WANT...?
WHAT I WANT
WOULD BE YOU...

YOU HAVEN'T COME HERE FOR SOME TIME.
YOU.
HURRY UP AND SAVE ME.

W... WHA-
WA-
AAAT?!
WAIT A MINUTE!! WHAT ARE YOU?!
WHY DO I HAVE TO SAVE A GHOST?!
HN? YOU.
DIDN'T YOU HEAR ANYTHING FROM YOUR GRANDMA?
I'M THE SPIRIT THAT LIVES IN THIS TREE.
MY NAME IS SHIZUYA...
!?
WELL, THINK OF ME AS SOMETHING LIKE THIS TREE'S ALTER EGO.
I WANT YOU TO HELP SAVE IT.
ボロッ
YOU MEAN HELP THIS DEAD TREE...?
ISN'T IT ALREADY TOO LATE?
IT'S NOT DEAD YET!!
SO RUDE!!

YOUR GRANDMA AND I WERE ACQUAINTANCES FOR QUITE A LONG TIME.
SURELY YOU WERE TOLD BY YOUR GRANDMA,
THAT SHE ENTRUSTED THIS TREE TO YOU?
THANKS TO THIS TREE BEING SICKLY,
YOUR GRANDMA, BEING A TREE SURGEON, OFTEN LOOKED AFTER IT.
SHE HERSELF SAID THAT THIS TREE HAD A SPECIAL PLACE IN HER HEART
AND, HELPED IT RIGHT UP UNTIL SHE DIED...
SO NOW IT'S YOUR TURN TO LOOK AFTER ME-
?
YOU DID THAT, GRANDMA?

LIAR.
YOU SAID YOU'D ALWAYS BE WITH ME.
AFTER MY PARENTS DIED
MY RELATIVES AND FRIENDS BECAME COLD AND DISTANT
EVEN IF IN THE BEGINNING THEY WERE KIND OUT OF SYMPATHY
IN THE END EVERYONE LEFT ME
AT YOUR AGE...
WHAT WERE YOU THINKING?

I'M SORRY, BUT FIND SOMEONE ELSE.
O-OI!
AND EVEN THOUGH BIT BY BIT
I FELT MY FROZEN HEART HAD BEGUN TO WARM
SAKIKO
IT'S ALRIGHT NOW I'M HERE.
I THOUGHT, 'THEN IT'D BE BETTER TO HAVE BEEN ALONE FROM THE START,' BUT
GRANDMA'S HANDS WERE SO WARM
ARE YOU JUST GOING TO IGNORE IT?!
IT WAS THE DYING WISH OF THE ONE WHO LOOKED AFTER YOU!!
.....
I DON'T WANT ANY-THING TO DO WITH ANYONE ANYMORE.
I'M GLAD I DIDN'T OPEN UP MY HEART
IF IT WAS GOING TO END UP LIKE THIS

"YOUR GRAND-DAUGHTER IS A PATHETIC IDIOT!" IS WHAT I'LL TELL YOUR GRANDMA!
Tch!
FINE! DO WHAT YOU WANT! YOU GLOOMY WOMAN!!
.....
.....
TELL MY...
!!
DOES THAT MEAN YOU CAN TALK WITH MY GRAND-MA?!
WAI... THAT WAS...
HUH?
IF SO THEN PLEASE!!
LET ME SPEAK TO HER!
I HAVE A COMPLAINT TO MAKE!!

ふう
UMM
THIS SHOULD BE RIGHT.
HEY NOW, WORK DILIGENTLY!
IF YOU DON'T YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO TALK TO YOUR GRAND-MA.
THAT'S ENOUGH!
NEXT IS THE BACK OF THE SUB-ROOT SPLIT INTO THREE IN THE RIGHT AND THOSE TWO ON THE LEFT AND RIGHT
WHERE ELSE DOES IT HURT?
11
DID YOU LOVE YOUR GRANDMA THAT MUCH?
THAT'S ALL YOU'VE BEEN GOING ON ABOUT.
IF I HEAL YOUR TREE I CAN TALK TO GRANDMA?
SAY, THAT'S THE TRUTH, RIGHT?

COULD YOUR LIFE HAVE BEEN LIKE THIS?
...YOU REEEALLY ARE GLOOMY, HUH.
NOT REALLY.
AND YOUR LIFE WITH YOUR KIND GRAND-MOTHER DIDN'T LAST LONG...
YOUR HEART WAS TRAUMATISED FROM BEING PASSED AROUND BETWEEN RELATIVES,
MEAN-WHILE, THE TWO OF THEM DIED IN AN ACCIDENT
YOU DIDN'T GET ON WITH YOUR BUSY PARENTS.
WELL EXCUSE ME FOR HAVING A DAYTIME DRAMA-STYLE LIFE!!
...KIND OF DAYTIME DRAMA-STYLE LIFE?
NO WAY. REALLY?

EH... SERIOUSLY ...?!!
SO WHAT?! WHAT WOULD A GHOST KNOW ABOUT DAYTIME DRAMAS?
CHIKI JUST EXISTING
WELL,
ISN'T IT OBVIOUS WHEN NOWADAYS EVEN ISEG* HAS THEM?
WHA- AA?!
T/N: Iseg is a digital AV broadcasting service for mobiles in Japan
WAI... HOW DO YOU HAVE A PHONE ...?
I TRIED MAKING A COPY COS IT'S CONVENIENT!
AH
WITHIN MINUTES!!
RIGHT NOW IN MY WORLD IT'S FASHIONABLE TO COPY HUMANS
WH... WHAT THIS GUY SAYS IS ABSURD!
HEY!
STOP BEING IDLE AND WORK!!
I AM WORK-ING!!
IT CAN'T BE HELPED, Y'KNOW! I'M ONLY ONE PERSON!
I GUESS THAT'S TRUE.
WELL THEN,
WHY DON'T YOU BRING ALONG SOME FRIENDS TO HELP YOU OR SOME-THING?
.....
IT'D BE EASIER FOR YOU WITH MORE PEOPLE AND MORE FUN, RIGHT?
...HUH?

SAKIKO... COULD YOU POSSIBLY NOT EVEN HAVE ANY FRIENDS ...?
.....
SERI-OUS-LY?!
RIGHT NOW, YOU'RE LIVING ALONE IN YOUR GRANDMA'S HOUSE TOO, RIGHT?
AREN'T YOU LONELY?
OW!
IT DOESN'T MATTER ABOUT ME, SURELY.
LEAVE ME ALONE.
YOU'VE CHANGED...
BACK THEN, YOU WERE...
?
DID YOU SAY SOMETHING JUST NOW?
NOPE, IT'S NOTHING

BACK THEN, YOU WERE MORE—
SAKIKO'S HERE!
HM !
BACK THEN
.....
HAAH.
SO.
WHY ARE YOU AT SCHOOL, AGAIN?

IN ANY CASE, YOU'RE ALRIGHT BEING APART FROM THE TREE?!
BEFORE YOU WERE BREATHING HARD JUST BY BEING A LITTLE APART!!
HM? WELL, THIS FAR IS FINE,
AND I'VE BEEN IN GOOD HEALTH LATELY THANKS TO YOU
LEAVING IT TO AN AMATEUR TO HEAL YOU
I HAVE NO IDEA ANYMORE WHAT MY GRANDMA WAS THINKING.
IT WOULD HAVE BEEN BETTER TO ASK A CELLENGE
GEEZ
WELL... YOU SAID YOU HAD NO FRIENDS
AND I THOUGHT YOU'D BE LONELY BY YOURSELF?
HOW DISTRACTING I'M A BOOK
STOP MEDDLING!!
SHE WAS ALWAYS MORE WORRIED ABOUT YOU THAN ME!!
LIAR!!
SHE WAS ALWAYS WORRYING ABOUT YOU...
EVEN PUTTING YOU IN HERE WELL
HAHA
THERE'S ONLY ONE THING SHE WAS THINKING ABOUT.

WELL, THAT'S FUNNY...
WHENEVER SHE CAME TO VISIT ME SHE'D ONLY TALK ABOUT YOU, YOU KNOW?
.....
COS EVEN I CAN AT LEAST BE SOMEONE TO TALK TO.
WHAT'S THAT?
HUH?
WHY ARE YOU GETTING ANGRY AT THAT?
I'M NOT ANGRY! ANYWAY, GO HOME!
!?
THIS ISN'T A GOOD PLACE FOR YOU TO-

H... HUH?
YOU'RE ALONE, AMAMIYA-SAN?
I THOUGHT I HEARD YOU TALKING WITH SOMEONE...
IT'S PROBABLY YOUR IMAGINATION
I'VE BEEN BY MYSELF THE WHOLE TIME
EH
BUT...
WELL THEN
BYE.
.....

KYA!
?!
.....
ARE YOU ALRIGHT?!
WHAT ON EARTH IS HE INTENDING?!
WAS THAT HIS DOING?
!
AH... IS THIS A BOOK ON CHERRY BLOSSOMS?
...

AMAMIYA-SAN, LATELY YOU'RE ALWAYS BY THAT TREE ON THE RIVERBANK, SO I STARTED WONDERING...
YOU REALLY ARE HEALING THAT CHERRY BLOSSOM TREE!
?
THA-
THAT'S NOT IT.
IF MAYBE YOU WERE DOING YOUR BEST TO SUCCEED YOUR GRANDMA AS A TREE SURGEON.
THAT CHERRY BLOSSOM TREE IS THE BIGGEST IN THE TOWN,
AND YOUR GRANDMA TOOK CARE OF IT,
BUT LATELY IT'S HEALTH SEEMED BAD SO EVERY-ONE IN TOWN WAS WORRYING...
AND SO, I WAS WONDERING ... IF THERE WASN'T ANYTHING I COULD DO...
!
STOP IT
U... EH... UM, AMAMIYA-SA...
I'M SORRY.

I'M IN A HURRY.
I DON'T WANT TO LISTEN TO ANYMORE OF THIS.
NOT KIND WORDS OR ABOUT MY GRANDMA...
OI, YOU!
YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO MAKE FRIENDS LIKE THAT!
AND AFTER I-
DON'T JUST DO AS YOU PLEASE!!

THE FEELINGS OF SOMEONE LEFT ON THEIR OWN
YOU PROBABLY DON'T UNDERSTAND
.....
WHAT, I WAS JUST TRYING TO...
.....
IT'S SO PAINFUL
AND SO SAD
I DON'T WANT TO FEEL THOSE KINDS OF THINGS ANYMORE
IF SOMEDAY I'M GOING TO END UP ALONE
THEN IT'S BETTER TO JUST BE ALONE FROM THE START.
た？…

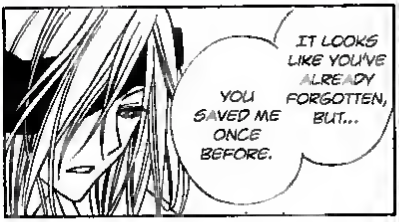
RAIN..?
ポツ
ポツ
.....
SAKI-CHAN
GRANDMA?
SAKI-CHAN
WHY?
I STILL ...
NO!!
DON'T DIE, GRAND-MA!!

—PLEASE DON'T LEAVE ME ALONE—
IT FEELS LIKE I CRIED FOR THE FIRST TIME IN AGES.
A DREAM ...?
HE'S ALWAYS—
DON'T TAKE PHOTOS WHEN SICK. YOU FEEL LESS IT?
IT'S FINE.
MY HEAD'S BEEN FILLED WITH LOOKING AFTER HIM.
LATELY

I REALLY DO UNDER-STAND...
WHAT HE WAS SAYING ABOUT FRIENDS AND THAT...
.....
BUT THAT'S DEFINITELY WRONG
STILL SCARED OF FACING SOMEONE-
EVEN SO, NATURALLY I'M
EH
DUE TO THE CURRENT LOCAL DOWNPOUR THE RIVER LEVELS ARE RISING AND IT IS VERY DANGEROUS.
THIS IS AN ANNOUN-CEMENT.
AN ALARM ?!
IT'S RAINING SO HARD!
ウー
ザー

CAN YOU HEAR ME?!
HEY, ARE YOU AL-RIGHT?!
THIS IS BAD, THE WATER'S ALREADY UP TO THERE!
SHIZUYA!!
ANSWER ME, PLEASE!
?!
IDIOT!
GO HOME RIGHT NOW!!

THAT'S WHY! THERE'S NOTHING YOU CAN DO ON YOUR OWN!
NO WAY!
AT THIS RATE YOU'LL BE SWEPT AWAY!
WAI... ARE YOU ALRIGHT ...?!
I'M FINE SO HURRY!
IT'S DANGER-OUS HERE
HE'S SO PALE!
BUT YOU PROMISED ME...
THAT I COULD TALK WITH MY GRANDMA-
W...
WHY... THAT'S...
THAT WAS A LIE.
?!
HA HA..
YOU REALLY BELIEVED ME, HUH..


YOU SAVED ME ONCE BEFORE.
IT LOOKS LIKE YOU'VE ALREADY FORGOTTEN, BUT...

I...
JUST WANTED TO THANK YOU.
ME?!

IT'S KIND OF LONELY FOR ONE TREE TO BE GROWING BY ITSELF ALONGSIDE THE RIVER.
NOPE
IT'S FINE NOW.

GRANDMA, THAT CHERRY BLOSSOM TREE LOOKS LIKE IT'S IN PAIN.
MY, WELL SPOTTED, SAKI-CHAN.
SHALL WE TAKE A LOOK AT IT?

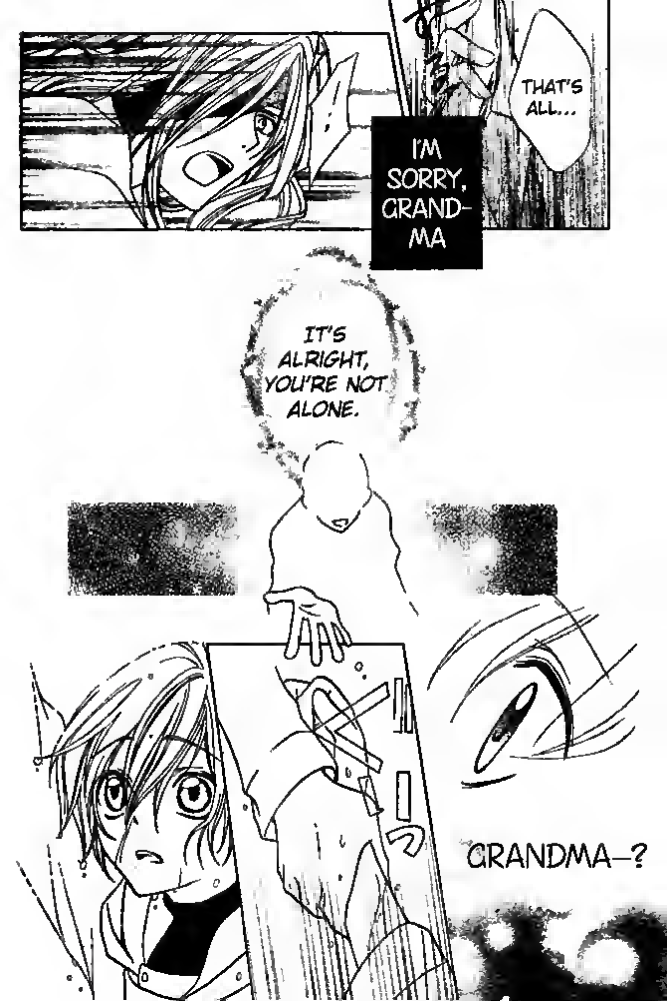
SO THIS TIME I WANTED ...
TO SUPPORT YOU.

I WAS HAPPY
COS SAKIKO'S HERE FOR IT.
BECAUSE I ALSO HAD ALWAYS BEEN ALONE.

I WANTED TO KEEP YOU HERE...
SO I LIED.
I'M SORRY.
SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO-
IT'S ALRIGHT.
HEY, I... HAD SOMETHING I WANTED TO SAY
SAKIKO!!
?!
ボ

THE TREE IS...?!
S-STOP IT!
THE ROOTS CAN'T HOLD THIS UP FOREVER!
JUST FORGET ABOUT ME!
SHUT UP!
IT'S MY FAULT!
I...
YOU KNOW, I CAME HERE TO APOLOGISE TO YOU...
CALLING IT A COMPLAINT WAS A LIE...

THE WORDS... I COULD NEVER SAY UNTIL THE END...
I WANTED TO SAY IT PROPERLY TO YOU.
I COULD NEVER SAY IT TO MY GRANDMA, BUT...
THANK YOU FOR WORRYING ABOUT ME.
I JUST WANTED TO TELL YOU...


THAT'S ALL...
I'M SORRY, GRAND-MA
IT'S ALRIGHT, YOU'RE NOT ALONE.
GRANDMA–?

THANK GOOD-NESS!
I THOUGHT YOU'D BE HERE.
!!
MY CLASS-MATES...
W... WHY ARE YOU HERE ...?!
WELL ... SINCE YOU WERE REALLY TAKING CARE OF THIS TREE...
I THOUGHT PERHAPS...
THANK GOODNESS I CAME!
AH
IT SEEMS EVERYONE FROM TOWN HAS COME AS WELL.
HEY
IS MISS AMAMIYA AL-RIGHT?
EVERYONE LOVES THIS CHERRY BLOSSOM TREE, YOU KNOW.
BUT THEN YOUR GRANDMA DIED
AND EVERYONE WAS SAD THAT IT MIGHT NEVER BLOOM AGAIN.
AND THEN YOU WERE TRYING YOUR HARDEST...

EVERY-ONE COULDN'T DO ANYTHING BEYOND WATCHING OVER YOU...
BUT TODAY WE CAN HELP YOU OUT!
LEAVE IT TO THE OLD GUYS!
NO WAY!
BUT THAT'S—
AH
I'M SO GLAD YOU'RE SAFE.
UNTIL NOW—

I WAS SO CONCERNED WITH MYSELF I DIDN'T REALISE
THAT EVERYONE WAS TRYING SO HARD TO BE THERE FOR ME
SAKI-CHAN, THAT'S GREAT, ISN'T IT.
WOW— IT'S SPRING!
I ALSO WANT TO BE LIKE THAT

桜子の心にも温かい花が咲き始めた——。

Credits
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